(b) whether poor patients these days are unable to get daily dose of insulin due to steep inflation;

(c) why the price of insulin suddenly escalated and whether vomine insulin may not be available any more; and

(d) if so, the steps Government propose to overcome this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N. T. SHANMUGAM) : (a) The estimated number of diabetic patients in the country is 25 million. Roughly 10% of this (2.5 million) is youth onset diabetes of the young. Youth onset diabetes require insulin for treatment and survival and most of them belong to the poor section of the society.

(b) and (c) There is some increase in the prices of insulin due to the introduction of newer and purer insulin (Human insulin) being prepared by DNA recombinant technology. Insulin is a scheduled bulk drug under DPCO, 1995. Its prices are fixed in accordance with the DPCO, 1995. Increase in price was due to dependence on imported insulin which has less pro-insulin contents. The increase, however, is mainly due to increase in c.i.f. prices, depreciation of India Rupee and improvement in the quality of Insulin National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority has reported that they have no information on likely non-availability of Bovine insulin in the near future.

(d) National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority in order to check the price rise and to make available the insulin to poor patients at reasonable prices,called a meeting of all the manufacturers/importers of insulin formulation on 30-7-1999 where the issue relating to prices of insulin based formulation and its supply were discussed. Some leading companies have agreed to supply insulin based formulations directly to Government Hospitals and Institutions for the use of poor patients.

Status of Indo Oman Fertilizer Plant

*569. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) what is the status of present venture of Indo Oman Fertilizer Plant that has failed to take off;

(b) whether Oman Minister has visited India to discuss the proposal for revival;

(c) the details regarding action for revival;

(d) the details regarding action for finally deciding on closure of the deal; and

(e) the funds invested on joint venture project by RCF so far?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU) : (a) to (d) Approval for setting up of an ammonia-urea project in Oman in joint venture with Oman Oil Company was accorded by the Government of India in December 1997. On account of the subsequent sharp decline in urea prices in the international market, it became necessary to revise and restructure the project. The revised and restructured project proposal is being processed for obtaining the approval of the competent authority.

H. E. Maqbool bin Ali bin Sultan, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Sultanate of Oman visited India to attend the 3rd Session of Indo-Oman Joint Commission meeting held in New Delhi during 27-28 April 2000. The project was discussed during the visit.

(e) An amount of Rs. 15.25 crore has so far been spent by RCF in connection with the Indo Oman Joint Venture Project.

Discounts by Bulk Drug Units due to Dumping

*570. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the Financial Express, New Delhi, dated 19th Oct., 1999, under the caption "Dumping drives bulk-drug units to heavy discounts"; and

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SURESH PRABHU) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) On the basis of applications filed with the and recommendations of the Anti-dumping Directorate, anti-dumping duties have been levied in